

AUGUST 30, 2023

The Psychology of Giving: Understand the motivations and drivers that influence donor behavior.

 **Bonterra**™ **DonorVoice**



Our Expert Speakers



Kevin Schulman
Founder

DonorVoice



Kimberly O'Donnell
Chief Fundraising
and Engagement Officer

 **Bonterra**TM

Corporate Social Responsibility

CyberGrants  WeSpire

Fundraising and Engagement

 everyaction Network  for Good.

GiveGab  salsa  Mobilize

 ActionKit  DONORTRENDS

Case Management

 Social Solutions

are now part of



BonterraTM

We power those who power
social impact.

Learning Objectives



Psychological principles of giving, such as commitment and identity.



Ways that donor behavior has shifted in this current digital age.



Science of words and how to incorporate it into your organization's storytelling.

A man with a shaved head, wearing a dark jacket and blue jeans, stands in the middle of a busy city sidewalk. He is holding a large white sign with black text. The sign reads: "IF YOU ASK ME FOR A £5 NOTE YOU CAN HAVE ONE". The sidewalk is paved with grey rectangular tiles. In the background, many people are walking in various directions. To the left, a woman in a bright purple jacket is walking away from the camera. To the right, a man in a dark suit is walking away, carrying a black bag. The street is lined with buildings and trees, and a traffic light is visible in the distance.

**IF YOU ASK
ME FOR A
£5 NOTE
YOU CAN
HAVE ONE**

To
Reinforce
Who
They Are



Connection to
Your Brand

Experience
with Your
Brand



Commitment

On a scale of 0 to 10, please indicate how much you agree with each statement, with "0" being "strongly disagree" and "10" being "strongly agree".

I am a committed St. Jude donor.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

St. Jude is my favorite charitable organization.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

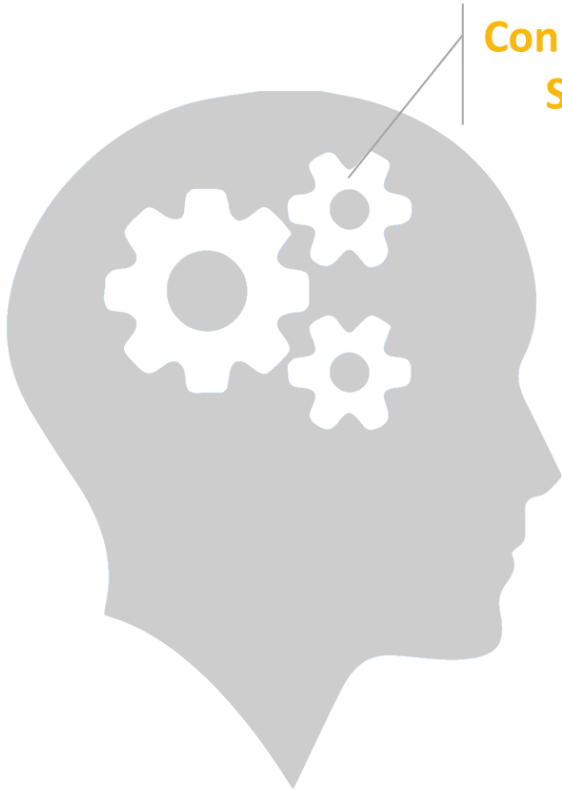
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

I feel a sense of loyalty to St. Jude.

Strongly disagree Strongly agree

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|

Connection to
St. Jude



DONOR DETAILS

 DONATION

 PAYMENT

 LEGAL

Recurring



Monthly



Annually

Your first gift was processed today and your following monthly donations will be withdrawn on the same date as your original sign up, each month.

Donation amount

\$15

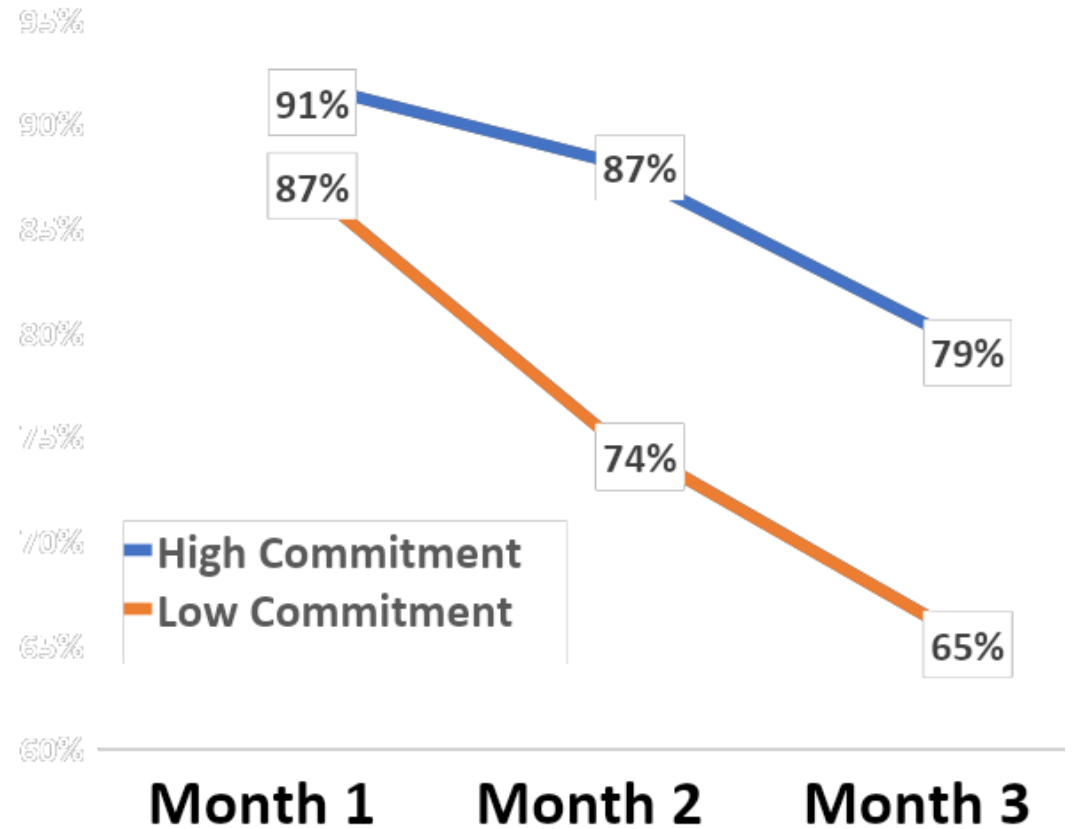
On a scale from 0 to 10, please indicate how much you agree with each statement

| | Strongly Disagree | | | | | Strongly Agree | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I am a committed Special Olympics supporter | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I feel a sense of loyalty to Special Olympics | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Special Olympics is my favorite charitable organization | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



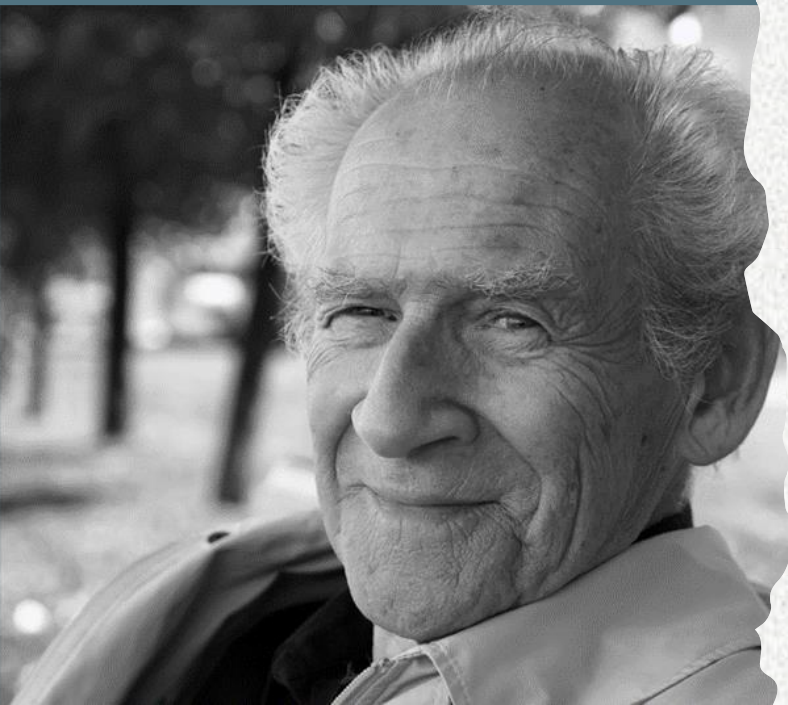
Next →

Retention





**Which Pair
Belongs
Together?**



We must prepare now. The special interests are mobilizing and, if they have their way, Congress could make good on their threat to repeal animal protection laws. I know you want to prevent that as much as I do.

You and Animal Wellness Action are the antidote to their stonewalling and greed.

That's why I'm asking for your support this #Giving Tuesday. Every penny you can give will help advocate for better, more humane laws to shield horses from cruelty and keep all animals safe.

Donate today to help horses

Please breathe life into your values and support efforts to prevent cruelty against horses. Together, we will save many lives this year and next.

Together we will fight for common-sense measures that will save many dogs from the worst types of torture.

We must be active and tireless. Because if we're not, the special interests and the anti-animal forces in Congress will win. I know you want to prevent that as much as I do.

That's why I'm asking for your support this #GivingTuesday. Every penny you can give will help us prepare for the new Congress...to advocate for better, more humane laws...laws that shield dogs from cruelty and greed and keep all animals safe.

Donate today to help dogs

Please breathe life into your values and support efforts to prevent cruelty against dogs. We won't relent in our work to save them.

The Value of Identity

| WELCOME EMAIL | OPEN RATE | CTR | UNSUB |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------|--------|
| Dog Email to dog people | 26% | .17% | 14% |
| Horse Email to Horse people | 22% | .17% | .13% |
| Dog Email to everyone | ↓ 11% | ↓ .05% | ↑ .28% |

Zero Party:

Data that a customer intentionally and proactively shares with a brand

Thank you, Kevin!

Thanks to your gift, families never receive a bill from St. Jude for treatment, travel, housing or food.



DONATION DETAILS

| Order number | Donation amount | Payment method | Donation type |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1-2825089 | (USD) \$5.10 | Credit Card - American Express | One Time |

Your receipt is being emailed to you.

[Print your receipt](#)

Any questions? Contact us: (800) 822-6344 or donors@stjude.org

How was your donation experience today?

[Start survey >>](#)

English ▾

Are you a parent or grandparent?

Parent

Grandparent

Neither

Do you know someone who has suffered, or currently suffers, from pediatric cancer?

Yes

No

Are you a medical professional?

Yes

No

THANK YOU!

[You're a Supporter now, helping](#) ~~Your support means~~ the ~~world to the~~ kids we serve. Wishes give kids courage and comfort, inspire optimism in parents and bring communities together. [As a](#) ~~When you donate to~~ Make-A-Wish® [donor](#), you make all of that possible.

[Share](#) [Tweet](#)



QUICK TIPS

Identity “Light”
Use Nouns Not Verbs

A close-up photograph of a young boy with dark hair, wearing a dark hoodie. He has his eyes squeezed shut and his mouth wide open in a shout or cry of pain. He is covering both of his ears with his hands, with his index fingers pointing into his ear canals. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The overall tone of the image is one of intense discomfort or distress.

Experience

Traditional Satisfaction Measure

How satisfied are you with our online donation process?

Very satisfied

Somewhat satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Somewhat dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Please tell us how true each statement is for your online giving experience.

Autonomy
Relatedness
Competence

| | Not at all true | Not true | I'm not sure | True | Very true |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| I felt pressured to give | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt like the decision to donate was mine | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt a sense of connection to the people I want to help | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt a sense of community | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt I could make a positive difference | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| I felt engaged with the cause | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Submit



Thu 5/4/2017 3:55 PM

Kevin Schulman

your feedback matters

To ○ Kevin Schulman

Cirrus Insight



Dear Kevin,

Your feedback means so much to us at the American Heart Association. Thank you for taking the time to comment on our recent Heart Walk.

Variable Copy:

Low Autonomy : We're very sorry to hear you felt pressured to make a gift. The decision to help is entirely your own and we want you to be comfortable with it.

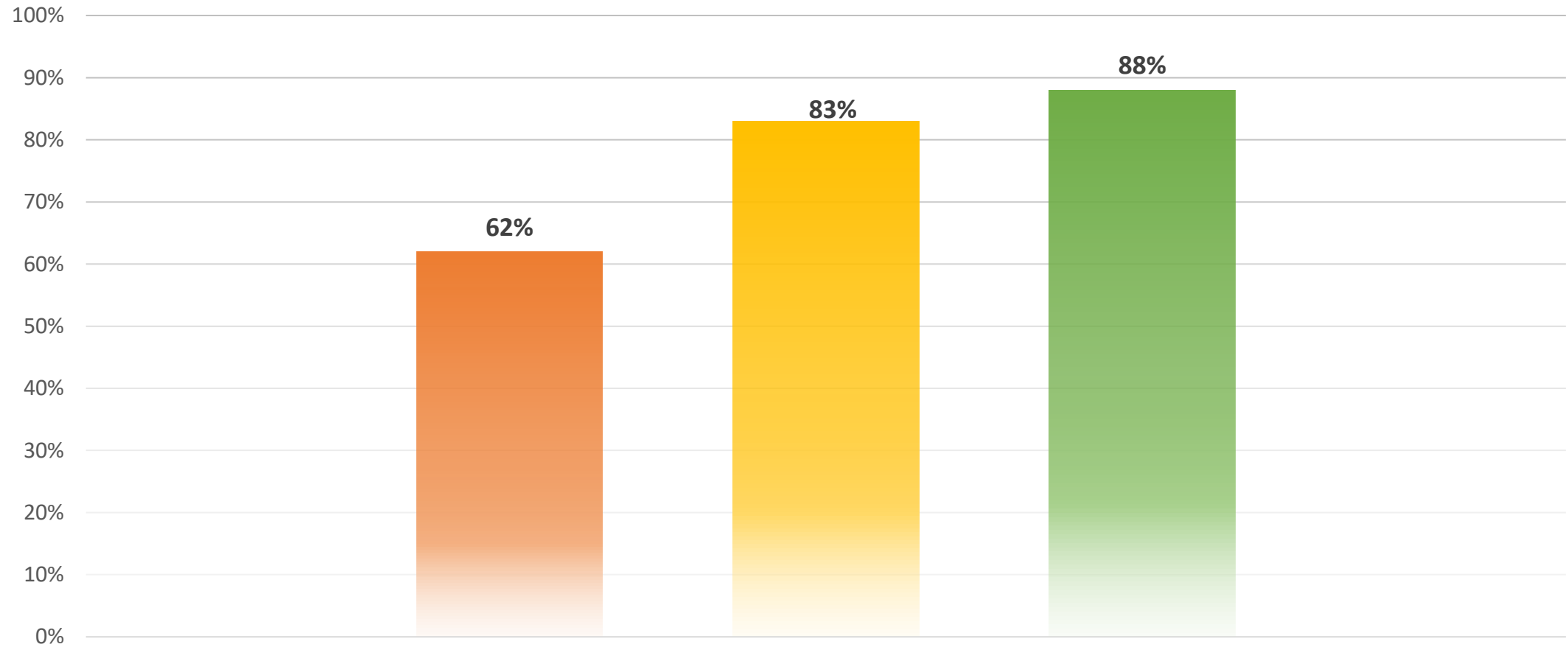
Low Relatedness: We're very sorry to hear your interaction with our fundraiser wasn't very positive.

Low Competence: We're very sorry to hear you didn't feel you could make a difference. This couldn't be further from the truth. On this [page](#) you can find our most recent successes, all thanks to generous supporters like you.

If you would like to share additional feedback or ask any questions, please do so anytime by contacting us at donorrelations@aha.org or 800-222-1111.

Sincerely,

Rose Dalba
National Director
Stewardship and Donor Relations
American Heart Association
rose.dalba@heart.org



Retention Rate

Low Need Satisfaction Medium Need Satisfaction High Need Satisfaction

DonorVoice

The Behavioral Science Fundraising Agency

Donors in the Digital Age

Current Donor Behavior Trends

Key Takeaways

- The decrease in donors was largely caused by losses of donors contributing \$500 and below.
- Donors being down in the first quarter is a pattern that continues from 2022.
- Decreases in overall donor counts are driven by weaker acquisition rates as well as lower retention of new donors.
- One-time donors were the largest group of donors but their participation dropped the most year-over-year, driving the overall decrease in donor participation.



Donors

-3.8% ↓

YOY Change



Donations

-0.7% ↓

YTD Change



Donor Retention¹

1.3% ↑

YTD Change

Revenue and retention metrics report on year-to-date (YTD) performance compared against the prior year total based on a panel* of organizations selected from the Growth in Giving Database of 176 million transactions from more than 20,000 organizations and **\$80 billion in donations** since 2005.

Shifts in donor behavior



More donors are online and on social media.



There are more ways to give: crowdfunding, crypto, gaming, complex assets, etc.

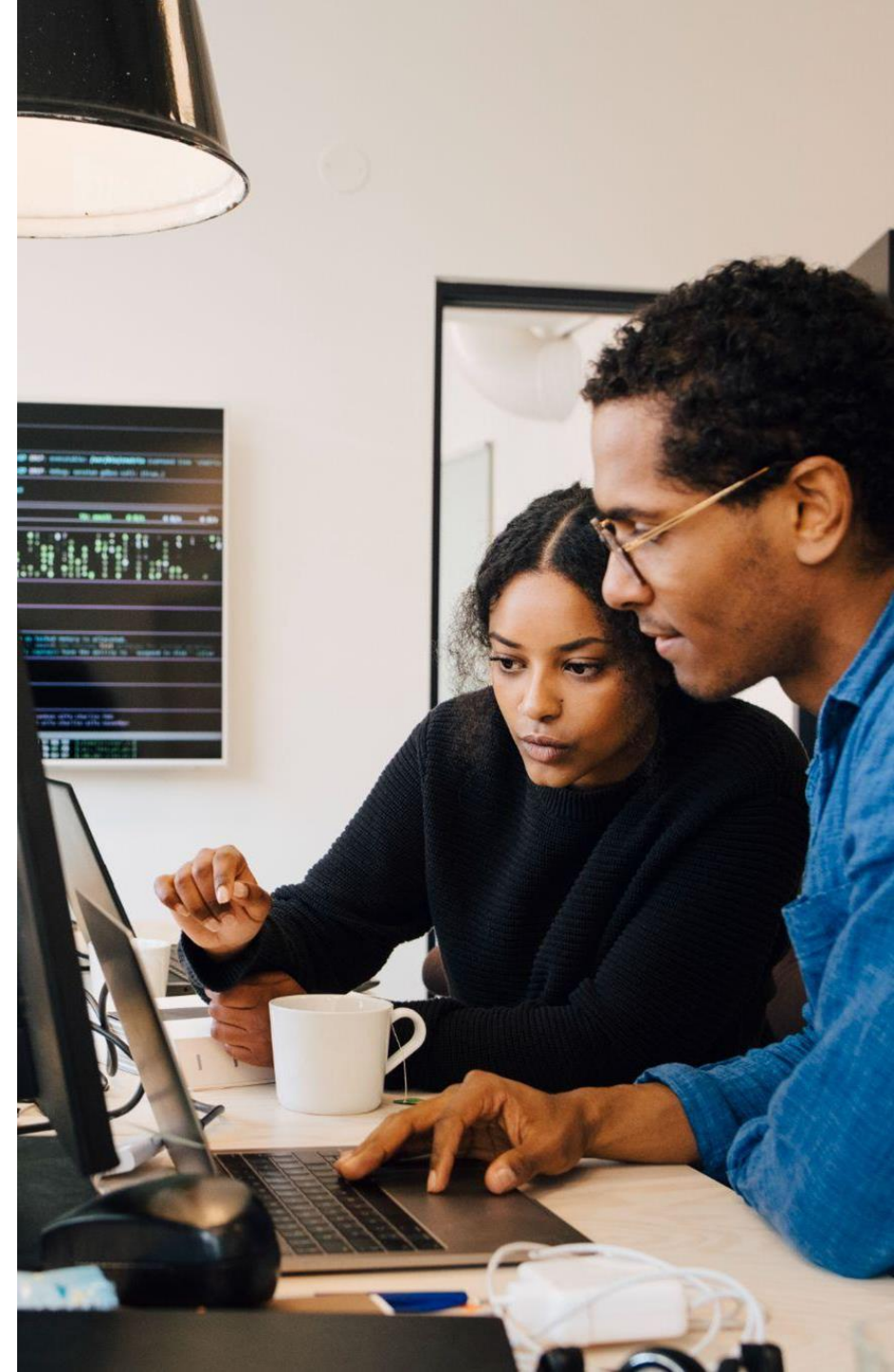


Some giving hesitation due to economy/stock market. Wait and see approach for year-end



What Should Nonprofits Be Doing Now?

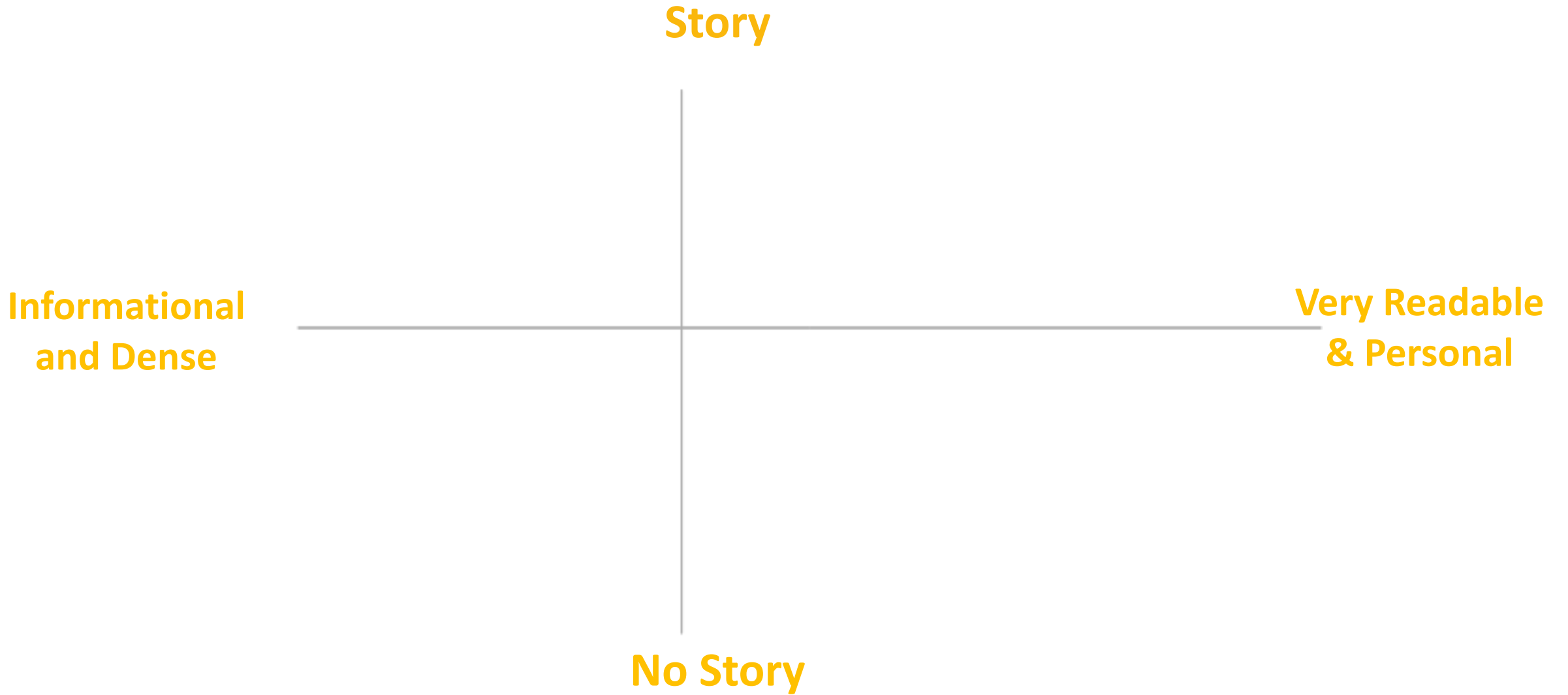
- **Holding back?** – *Never* – but be authentic in communication and mindful of their audience.
- **Doubling down?** – *Always*, the sector is under-resourced. In previous recessions, nonprofits who cut their fundraising efforts lost market share in their particular area. When one organization pulls back, donors will turn to another organization to fill their need to give.
- **Diversifying their fundraising even more?** Diverse funding streams provide sustainability during economic uncertainty. Diverse donor bases provide sustained growth over time.
 - There are a variety of ways in which an organization can raise funds, and there will continue to be more in the future. It is important not to put all your eggs in one basket, in addition to always meeting the donor where they are—with messaging that resonates.



The Science of Words and Storytelling

The Words We Use Matter

Readability + Story = Higher
Response





Story

Romantic Fiction

General Fiction

Press reports

Informational and Dense

Academic Prose

Very Readable & Personal

Personal Letter

No Story

Parts Speech that Make Readability **Worse**

1. **Nouns.** The fix is replacing nouns with pronouns (e.g., he, she, they, it)
2. **Long words** that are difficult to read
3. **Adjectives** that don't add much to the message. Focus on showing instead of telling - (e.g., the horse cast a huge shadow instead of "the big horse")
4. **Prepositional phrases are usually unnecessary.** Try removing these entirely or use verbs (e.g., violate instead of 'in violation of') or stronger verbs ('He stated his innocence with intensity' to 'He declared his innocence')

Parts Speech that Make Readability **Better**

1. **To increase the intensity**, use words like really, very, extremely, highly, intensely, strongly, perfectly, totally, utterly, etc..
2. **Make your copy feel more like a natural conversation** by using well, now, anyhow, anyways.
3. **Add conversational emphasis** to your writing with “just, really, most, more, for sure, a lot, such as.”
4. **Use we and our** to bring the reader in, use I or me to share details about the writer.
5. **Use versions of 'you'** but you don't need to use more than other pronouns.
6. **Use contractions** to make your writing more informal.
7. **Share the thoughts and feelings of the writer** using a first-person pronoun (I or we) and these verbs - hope, believe, want, need, suspect, imagine, dream, fear, think, realize, discover.

Parts Speech that Make Story **Better**

- Where a person or place has already been mentioned **refer to her/him/it using these words**
- **Verbs are powerful**, use them to show how things were before the charity helped
- Describe events in the past using “**has, have, or had**”
- **Bring the main character to life showing them 'speaking'** using a pronoun (he, she, they) and these verbs - declared, stated, admitted, said, boasted, affirmed, confirmed, asserted, hinted, reported



Copy Optimizer at Work

CONTROL: Not Copy Optimized

TEST: With DonorVoice Copy Optimizer™

Overall Engagement Score

Current 42 Prior 43

Overall Engagement Star Ratings



Readability Score

Current 82 Prior 82

Story Score

Current 3 Prior 3



SUPPORT SENIORS AND OTHERS FACING HUNGER
EVERY \$1 = 4 MEALS

<XXXXXXXXXX Mrs. Sample XXXXXXXXXXXXX>
<TrueSense Marketing>
<155 Commerce Drive>
<Freedom, PA 15042>

<Month XX, 20XX>

4 meals!

Dear <XXXXXXXXXX Mrs. Sample XXXXXXXXXXXXX>,

It's been more than a year since the COVID-19 pandemic caused a surge in need for emergency food. And it hasn't let up.

So many seniors, children and families in our community are having trouble getting enough nourishing food to eat. Approximately 20 percent of individuals served by your Foodbank's network of hunger-relief programs are seniors. These neighbors continue to turn to the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank and our network partners in record numbers to provide the food they need.

The good news is people like you are continuing to step up with kindness, compassion and generosity to help in these times. And here's even more great news: you can do it again now, and every dollar you give helps provide enough food for 4 meals. Just imagine being at the grocery store and picking up four meals for \$1!

That's what happens when you give to **support local seniors and families facing hunger**. With the Foodbank's resources, we can stretch your \$1 to provide enough food for 4 nourishing meals!

Having nourishing food is critical for anyone, but it's especially important for seniors. Foods like fresh produce, meat and dairy are essential to staying healthy. But these essential foods are becoming more difficult to access as the effects of the pandemic stretch on.

So we're really counting on you now. **Show your support for seniors and families facing hunger.**

- If you can give a gift of <\$XX!>, it will help provide <YY!> meals. You can make that happen by returning the top meal

<PHONE> | <URL>



SUPPORT SENIORS AND OTHERS FACING HUNGER
EVERY \$1 = 4 MEALS

<XXXXXXXXXX Mrs. Sample XXXXXXXXXXXXX>
<TrueSense Marketing>
<155 Commerce Drive>
<Freedom, PA 15042>

<Month XX, 20XX>

\$1 = 4 meals!

Dear <XXXXXXXXXX Mrs. Sample XXXXXXXXXXXXX>,

He fought in Korea, for you and me and our way of life. He suffered a lot, worked odd jobs after the war but never really got his life back. But he'd never complain.

He's 80 now, living in the same house he grew up in with his sister, Julia. She looks after him nowadays, as best she can. She has been so grateful for those senior boxes, the ones they offer at her senior center. She gets him one a month, it's enough for 25 meals.

Seniors like Harold, your neighbors, they're going hungry and COVID-19 makes it worse. They're still coming to our Foodbank in record numbers, many for the very first time.

Your gift really matters!

Now, here's good news. When you use the coupon we've shared, every dollar you donate helps provide enough food for 4 meals. Just imagine, you're at the grocery store, you open your wallet and every dollar becomes 4 meals!

We understand you and your family may also have come on hard times, but please know the choice is yours and every little bit helps. So, if you're able, please give today to help seniors and others in need.

With deepest gratitude,
Signature
<Signer Name>
<Signer Title>

Overall Engagement Score

Current 93 Prior 93

Overall Engagement Star Ratings



Readability Score

Current 88 Prior 88

Story Score

Current 99 Prior 99

RESPONSE
AVERAGE GIFT
ROI

2.7%
\$244
8.7

3.1%
\$298
11.7

Recap



Giving serves three psychological needs: Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness.



We must adjust to the changing psychological behaviors and needs of donors.



Language and choice of words play a significant role in eliciting a response from donors.



Questions?

Let's connect!

To sign up for the Agitator, text "DVAgitator" to (781) 262-3877

Bonterra: Sales@Bonterratech.com

DonorVoice: kschulman@thedonorvoice.com